

CHAPTER 4**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL****LESSON TITLE: STAYING ALERT AND FIT TO DRIVE****A. TRAINING OBJECTIVE**

TASK: Demonstrate knowledge of procedures to stay alert and fit to drive.

CONDITIONS: Given instruction in a classroom.

STANDARD: Correctly answer verbal questions when called upon.

B. INTERMEDIATE TRAINING. None.**C. ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Training time: Recommended instructional time is 0.5 hours.
2. Training location: Scheduled classroom.
3. Training type: Conference.
4. Students: Scheduled personnel.
5. Principal and assistant instructors required: One primary instructor for each class of 20 students.
6. Training aids and equipment: Overhead projector, transparencies, and screen.
7. References: AR 385-55 and FM 21-305.

D. SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITY**1. INTRODUCTION.**

a. **Interest Device.** Safe driving depends on skill, correct decisions, and the driver's physical and mental condition. Many factors affect physical and mental abilities. As a pedestrian, passenger, or driver, you must make responsible decisions about the use of alcohol and other drugs. If you are tired or emotionally upset, you are less able to drive safely. A severe headache or minor illness can also influence your driving.

b. **Tie-in.** At various times, you will need to decide whether you are fit to continue driving. You may also have to decide if it is safe to ride with another driver. To make the right decisions, you need to understand conditions that affect driving abilities. In some cases, there are ways to offset these effects. Sometimes the wisest decision is to postpone driving.

c. **Lesson Objective.**

ACTION: After this lesson the student will know the procedures to stay alert and fit to drive.

CONDITIONS: Given instruction in a classroom.

STANDARD: Correctly answer verbal questions when called upon.

d. **Procedures.**

(1) *Explanation.*

(2) *Summary.*

2. EXPLANATION.

Transparency 4-8

a. **Be Ready to Drive.**

(1) *Get enough sleep.* Leaving on a long trip when you are already tired is dangerous. If you have a long trip scheduled, ensure that you get enough sleep before you depart. Most people require 7 to 8 hours of sleep every 24 hours.

(2) *Schedule trips safely.* Your body gets accustomed to sleeping during certain hours. If you are driving during those hours, you will be less alert. If possible, try to schedule trips for the hours you are normally awake. Many vehicle accidents occur between midnight and 6 o'clock in the morning. Tired drivers can easily fall asleep at these times, especially if they do not regularly drive at those hours. Trying to complete a long trip at these hours can be very dangerous.

(3) *Avoid medication.* Many medicines can make you sleepy. Avoid driving if you are taking medication with a label warning against operating vehicles or machinery. The most common medicine of this type is an ordinary cold pill. If you have to make a long trip, drive with a cold. You are better off suffering from the cold than from the effects of the medicine.

(4) **Keep cool.** If the vehicle's interior is too hot, you can get sleepy. Keep the window or vent cracked or use the air conditioner, if you have one. Also, when the temperature outside is cold, do not have the heater control set too high. Again, this can make you drowsy.

(5) **Take breaks.** Short breaks can keep you alert. The time to take them is before you feel really drowsy or tired. Stop often. It may help to walk around or do some physical exercises.

Transparency 4-9

b. Alertness.

(1) **Do not “push on”.** When you are sleepy, trying to “push on” is far more dangerous than most drivers think. It is a major cause of fatal accidents.

(2) **Stop to sleep.** When your body needs sleep, sleep is the only thing that will work. If you have to make a stop anyway, make it whenever you feel the first signs of sleepiness, even if it is earlier than you planned. By getting up a little earlier the next day, you can keep on schedule without the danger of driving while you are not alert.

(3) **Take regular rest stops.** Even if you are not tired, take regular rest stops. Switch off with another driver every hour or so. Stop for coffee or a soft drink every 100 miles or every two hours.

(4) **Take a nap.** If you cannot stop for the night, at least pull off the road and take a nap. A nap as short as a half-hour will do more to overcome fatigue than a half-hour coffee stop.

(5) **Avoid drugs.** There are no drugs that can overcome being tired. While they may keep you awake for a while, they will not make you alert. Eventually, you will be even more tired than if you had not taken them. Sleep is the only thing that can overcome fatigue.

Transparency 4-10

c. Alcohol and Driving.

(1) **Drinking and driving-a serious problem.** Drinking alcohol and then driving is a very serious problem. People who drink alcohol are involved in traffic accidents resulting in over 16,000 deaths and 300,000 injuries each year. Over 40 percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. You should know:

- How alcohol works in the human body.
- How it affects driving.
- Laws regarding drinking and driving.
- Legal, financial, and safety risks of drinking and driving.

(2) ***The truth about alcohol.*** There are many dangerous ideas about the use of alcohol. The driver who believes in these wrong ideas will be more likely to get into trouble. Here are some examples:

FALSE	THE TRUTH
Alcohol increases your ability to drive.	Alcohol is a drug that will make you less alert and reduces your ability to drive safe.
Some people can drink a lot and not be affected.	Everyone who drinks is affected by alcohol.
If you eat a lot first, you will not get drunk.	Food will not keep you from getting drunk.
Coffee and a little fresh air will help a drinker sober up.	Only time will help a drinker sober up – other methods do not work.
Stick with beer – it is not as strong as wine or whiskey.	A few beers are the same as a few shots of whiskey or a few glasses of wine.

Transparency 4-11

(3) ***Definition of a drink.*** What is a drink? It is the alcohol in drinks that affects human performance. It does not make any difference whether that alcohol comes from “a couple of beers” or from two glasses of wine or two shots of hard liquor.

(4) ***Drinks that have same alcohol content.*** The following drinks contain the same amount of alcohol:

- A 12 ounce glass of 5 percent beer.
- A 5 ounce glass of 12 percent wine.
- A 1 1/2 ounce shot of 80 proof liquor.

(5) ***How alcohol works.*** Alcohol goes directly from the stomach into the blood stream. A drinker can control the amount of alcohol he consumes. However, the drinker cannot control how fast the body disposes the alcohol. If you have drinks faster than the body can get rid of them, you

will have more alcohol in your body and your driving will be more affected. The amount of alcohol in your body is commonly measured by the BAC.

(6) ***What determines BAC.*** BAC is determined by the amount of alcohol you drink (more alcohol means higher BAC), how fast you drink (faster drinking means higher BAC), and your weight (a small person does not have to drink as much to reach the same BAC).

(7) ***Alcohol and the brain.*** Alcohol affects more of the brain as BAC builds up. The first part of the brain affected controls judgment and self control. One of the bad things about this is it can keep drinkers from knowing they are getting drunk. Good judgment and self control are absolutely necessary for safe driving.

(8) ***The build-up of BAC.*** As BAC continues to build, muscle control, vision, and coordination are affected more. Eventually, a person will pass out.

(9) ***How alcohol affects driving.*** All drivers are affected by drinking alcohol. Alcohol affects judgment, vision, coordination, and reaction time. It causes serious driving errors, such as:

- Increased reaction time to hazards.
- Driving too fast or too slow.
- Driving in the wrong lane.
- Running over the curb.
- Weaving.
- Straddling lanes.
- Quick, jerky starts.
- Not signaling, failure to use lights.
- Running stop signs and red lights.
- Improper passing.

(10) ***Increased chances of a crash.*** These effects mean increased chances of a crash. Accident statistics show that the chance of a crash is greater for drivers who have been drinking than for drivers who were not.

Transparency 4-12

d. Other Drugs.

(1) ***Legal and illegal drugs that are dangerous.*** Besides alcohol, other legal and illegal drugs are being used more often. Laws prohibit possession or use of many drugs while driving. Laws also prohibit someone from being under the influence of any “controlled substance,” an amphetamine

(including “pep pills” and “bennies”); narcotics; or any other substance which can make the driver unsafe. This could include a variety of prescription and over-the-counter drugs (cold medicines) which may make the driver drowsy or otherwise affect safe driving ability.

(2) ***Heed warning labels and doctor’s orders.*** Pay attention to warning labels of legitimate drugs and medicines and to doctor’s orders regarding possible effects. Stay away from illegal drugs. Do not use any drugs that hide fatigue – the only cure for fatigue is rest. Alcohol can make the effects of other drugs much worse. The safest rule is do not mix drugs with driving.

(3) ***Drugs equal traffic accidents.*** Use of drugs can lead to traffic accidents resulting in death, injury, and property damage. Furthermore, it can lead to arrests, fines, and jail sentences. It can also mean the end of a person’s driving.

Transparency 4-13

e. **Illness.** Any health problem can affect your driving – a bad cold, infection, or a virus. Even little problems like a stiff neck, a cough, or a sore leg can affect your driving. If you are not “up to par,” let someone else drive.

f. **Emotions.** Emotions quickly affect your judgment and ability to drive. You cannot drive well if you are worried, excited, afraid, angry, or just down. An emotional state, in most cases, will eventually affect your coordination. Emotions are hard to control. Here are a few tips:

- *Angry or excited.* If you are angry or excited, give yourself time to cool off. Take a short walk. Kick a telephone pole. But, stay off the road until you are calmed down.
- *Worried or down.* If you are worried or down about something, try to take your mind off it. Listen to the radio. It is often easier to listen to someone else than it is to try to take your mind off your problems.
- *Impatient.* If you are the impatient type, give yourself extra time. Leave a few minutes early so that you will not tend to speed, shave traffic lights, or do other things that can get you a traffic ticket or result in a collision.

g. **Vision and Hearing.**

(1) Good vision is essential for driving. Most of what we do behind the wheel is based on what we see. Good eyesight means:

- *Seeing clearly.* If you cannot see clearly, you cannot judge distances or spot trouble, so you will not be able to do something about it.
- *Good side vision.* You need to see out of the corners of your eyes. This lets you spot cars creeping up on either side of you while your eyes are on the road ahead.
- *Judging distances.* You may be able to see clearly and still not be able to judge distances. Good distance judgment is important in knowing how far you are from other cars.
- *Good night vision.* Many people who can see clearly in the daytime have trouble at night. Some cannot make things out in dim light. Others may have trouble with the glare of headlights.

NOTE: It is important to have your eyes checked every year or two. You may never know about bad side vision or bad distance judgment unless your eyes are checked.

(2) Hearing is more important to driving than many people realize.

- *Horns, sirens, or screeching tires.* Your hearing can warn you of danger – the sound of horns, a siren, or screeching tires. Sometimes you can hear a car in your blind spot that you cannot see.
- *Hearing problems.* A hearing problem, like bad eyesight, can come on so slowly that you do not notice it. Drivers who know they have hearing problems can adjust. They can learn to rely more on their seeing habits.
- *Turn down the radio.* People with good hearing cannot hear well if the radio is blaring. Keep it turned down and at least one window partly open.

3. SUMMARY.

Transparency 4-14

- Recap Main Points.** Call on students to answer questions presented on Transparency 4-14.
- Allow for Questions.**
- Clarify Questions.**
- Give Closing Statement.** Your own condition – your physical, mental, and emotional fitness to drive – outweigh any other hazard you will face on the road. Even a simple headache or cold will affect your ability to drive safely. Be as objective as possible about your fitness to drive at any time.

E. SAFETY RESTRICTIONS. None.

F. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION. None.